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THE DIRECTOR'S MONTHLY REVIEW
ISSUED BY THE

:: :: CENTRAL SECRETARIATE OF SODALITIES OF OUR LADY :: ::

For circulation among Ours only

:: :: THE ADAPTATION OF SODALITY RULES TO DIFFERENT PLACES :: ::

One of Ours from Jugoslavia, a man of great authority and experience in Sodality affairs, has written us about the way in which the Rules of the Sodality approved by Very Rev. Father General Wernz in 1910, ought to be adapted to times and places.

« Great inconveniences are caused, » he writes, « by the fact that the customs of Sodalities here, and indeed as far as I know in almost half of Europe, do not agree in all respects with these Rules. The Rules often go into the most minute particulars, and into things which neither can nor ought to be observed in the same way everywhere, so that the Sodalists and even the Candidates despise the Rules or look upon them as not addressd to themselves, since the Sodality practices depart from them here and there.

« Take the 5th Rule for example which says that the regular meeting of the Sodality should take place on Sunday, and even on every holy day of obligation without exception.

« Now with us, and as far as I know in many other countries too, the meetings are not held on Sunday, but *during the week.* On Sunday, the clergy are extremely busy, and cannot attend to the special exercises of the Sodality, nor withdraw themselves from the care of the people. Neither does it seem advisable that the Sodalists should be kept away from the common devotions of the parish or other churches to the disedification of the public. If on the other hand, they must be present at both the public and the Sodality exercises of piety, too much would be asked of them. Another point : Sunday in large cities and for very busy people, is the only day when a man can be with his family or go for an outing in the country, and this is something which the Sodalists are certainly not to be deprived of. Again if the meeting be held on Sunday together with the Mass, it is difficult to see how to carry out Sodality customs aside from the mere exercises of piety. Thus Consultations, Academies, Sections, Instruction of Candidates, Apostolic or Apologetic discussions must go by the board, unless the Sodalists are to be kept several hours from their breakfasts.

« As this is out of the question, it would be necessary for them to come again during the week for these activities, and thus there would be two meetings a week ; and that is too much, and often could not be had at all, on account of the distance of the Sodalists and their various occupations.

« Other examples : In the regulations for the conduct of the weekly meetings, it seems to be taken for granted that the meeting is to be held in a chapel or a church, since the rule says that a pious book should be read while the Sodalists are assembling. Now our custom is that the Sodalists assemble in another place outside the chapel and engage in friendly conversation, until the signal is given to enter the chapel. This custom has very great advantages ; it enables the Sodalists to get acquainted with each other and to talk over the apostolic activities in which they are interested. And, judging by my own experience, I make bold to assert that where it is not the custom to give the Sodalists an opportunity for such friendly conversation, it is rare that the Sodality amounts to anything more than a pious

union, which is not held together either by the bonds of social intercourse or by association in the apostolate.

The number of Consultors prescribed is twelve, but this in many cases is excessive. Hardly anyone among us recites the evening prayers commended in the 34th Rule, as the vast majority prefer to recite the act of consecration of St. Frances de Sales just before going to bed. The funds of the Sodality for obvious reasons are hardly ever kept by the Treasurer here, but by the Procurator of Our house. According to the 60th and 61st rules, two Sacristans and two or more Recorders are prescribed, a thing which we hardly ever observe, and which seems unnecessary. The 65th Rule says that « *The Major and Minor Officers described in these Rules are common to all Sodalities* ». But how often it happens that there are no Visitors of the Sick (in Colleges) and no Librarians (where the Sodality is too poor to have a library), etc.

It is true that the Common Rules say that provision is to made for the peculiarities of times and places. But what is to be done, where the local Rules must overturn almost all the particulars set out in the Common Rules?"

From the above indictment, Father deems that the Common Rules be revised once more, so as to contain nothing but what can be observed equally well everywhere, the rest to appear in a Directory or in local Rules.

Editor's Reply.

This is really an important matter. But as we hope to show, the proper solution of the difficulty is not the revision proposed. It is true that the Rules of Very Reverend Father General Wernz, where they descend to particulars, cannot be observed everywhere in the same way. But those same Rules do not demand that. They are full of such expressions, as "*where it is the custom*", "*it would be well*", "*the ordinary method is*", "*as far as possible*", etc. And these expressions, while they are not repeated in every Rule, nevertheless show the general nature of the Rules, which far from excluding, even advises their prudent application and adaptation to the circumstances of times and places. The Rules are more directive than preceptive. In fact, it would have been hard for the framers of the Rules to have done otherwise.

Because if they had prescribed only such things as could be reduced to practice by absolutely all Sodalities, some of the articles would have been as dry and as void of life and color as the sections of a statute-book. It was preferable therefore that some Rules should be quite full of particulars though only directive for the most part, and should thus serve as a model, in which the nature and operation, constitution and life of the Sodalities might be shown *as in a single rule*, Wherefore although as regards many particulars, the Rules reflect the customs of the Barcelona Sodality, they can properly and easily be adapted to the ways of other nations. Besides there is no way to revise the Rules, which would avoid new perturbations and inconveniences; especially since these Rules have met with very general approbation, have frequently been adopted as a satisfactory norm, and in some countries have even been prescribed by the Episcopate as the model to be followed.

Practically therefore, to evade the very real difficulties mentioned by our Correspondent, great care should be taken by Directors to explain to Sodalists and Candidates the model and directive character ot the Common Rules.

Instead of saying baldly "*We do not keep this Rule*", one may say "*This Rule is observed by us in the following manner*" or "*has been modified thus and so, in order to fit our particular circumstances*". Then local Rules should be added when needed to the Common Rules and the relation between the two should be explained to the Sodalists. Thus the wonderment of the Sodadalists will practically vanish.

Finally we may note, that the vigor of the Sodalities is not contained alone in its written laws. A distinguished Englishman on hearing it objected that the laws of England were entirely antiquated and unfit for their purpose, very aptly replied: "*And yet while keeping those laws, we have prospered for centuries.*"

The same thing can take place in the Sodality. Even if the wording of Rules is sometimes a bit defective, we will be able to use them admirably, if we diligently cultivate the genuine spirit of the Sodality which appears in them.

It is not enough today to care only for those who spontaneously present themselves but we must seek out ways of coming upon our lost sheep.

It is not enough that we should sacrifice ourselves with labors however great in bringing back the lost sheep, but we must use lay apostles to help us and also to reach those whom we alone can never touch.

It is not enough to exhort Catholics in a general way to the apostolate, but we must educate them and exercise them constantly in virtue, in knowledge of the faith, and in apostolic methods.

It is not enough to give this formation to *individuals* only; if we would attain our purpose in an orderly and constant manner, we must train organized bodies for the work.

The Sodality of Our Lady, as its Rules show, is such a body. Let us make it use of it then for the greater extension, development and perfection of our Apostolate.

CHILDREN'S SODALITIES

Even experienced Directors differ on the advisability of admitting children under fourteen years of age into the Sodality. Some think the Sodality should be reserved for maturer youths and for adults. The question is very hotly debated in Austria, where there are a large number of Sodalities for children in the larger cities.

Let us look at the reasons for and against Sodalities for children.

Reasons for.

They are as follows:

1. *From the concept and the nature of the Sodality.* The Sodality is a Marian association devoted to promoting holiness of life above the ordinary and to forming apostles. But boys and girls from ten to fourteen years of age, are capable of both. Why then exclude them?

2. *From experience.* Children's Sodalities flourish and give excellent results in many places. It is true that this is the case almost entirely in the larger cities, where children become sophisticated very quickly and children of ten to fourteen years understand very well the matters treated of in the Sodality. They take part in the consultations, they attempt very praiseworthy apostolic work, especially among their school-mates, etc. It must be admitted that this cannot be said for the country.

Again, unless they are admitted into the Sodality at an early age, it is to be feared that they will easily lose their innocence and will not wish to enter the Sodality later.

It is said that almost 80 per cent of the Child Sodalists remain faithful to the Sodality and afterwards enter the respective Sodality for young men or young women.

Finally, even anti-Catholic and indifferent societies make every effort to inoculate young children with their ideas and to take them under their wing in one way or another. If we let these tender children slip from our hands, we will pay dearly later on for our delay.

3. *From authority.* Men of great authority in Sodality matters, such as Father George Harrasser, S. J., are strong advocates of Children's Sodalities in large cities. They cite the example of John Leunis himself, who founded the first Sodality among the little boys of the lowest grammar class.

Reasons Against Children's Sodalities.

One hardly knows to what side to incline on hearing the opponents, there is so much reason in what they say:

1. *From the nature of the Sodality.* If one looks at the Sodality in the abstract, children are somewhat fit for the end proposed to the Sodality; but in the concrete, to live the life of the Sodality and to value properly what is usually done in the Sodality, require more years and spirit, and we should not permit such affairs as consultations, Sections, etc., to be carried on like a game.

2. *From experience.* A thing to be feared and avoided at all hazards, is the loss of esteem for the Sodality on the ground that it is essentially for children only. The Sodality has already lost enough of its good reputation, say these Directors; because there are so many *women and girls* in it, entire nations regard it as a society for pious women, and so men will not enter it. Why should we increase the difficulty by admitting *children* besides? Psychology is against the proposition.

Again, the importance of the Sodality will decrease even in the estimation of the children themselves; if they see that it can be adapted to children also and is not kept for the grown-ups, they will be prone to cast it off with their childish ways.

Finally, whence shall we get Priests and Directors for the older folk, if for the sake of educating the youngsters we overwhelm the Directors we have with the not inconsiderable work involved in directing the Sodality?

3. *Authority may be set off against authority;* many eminent Directors are dead against opening the Sodality to children. And in this matter the example of our forbears can be cited to the contrary; for it was not the custom formerly to bring boys into the Marian Sodality, but other societies were instituted (e. g. The Holy Angels or St. John Berchmans Societies, etc.), the Sodality being reserved for the older boys.

What is the proper solution?

Unless someone else has a better suggestion, the best solution of the question seems to us to lie in the distinction already pointed out. Generally speaking for the reasons above set forth, entrance to the Sodality may be justly refused to children under 14 years of age. But where, as in the larger cities, children are more precocious, and there is danger in delay, there is no reason for looking too closely into their age. But although we open the Sodality to children, it seems the wiser plan to give their Sodality another name (e. g. the Guardian Angels), keeping the name and the honor of the Sodality for those of 14 years and upwards. This will not prevent implanting in these societies the exercises and spirit of the Sodality and especially zeal for solid virtue and a very special love for the Blessed Virgin; it can be done too in the usual Sodality method and in a manner fitted to children.

We should be glad to hear from our readers on this point.

Captain Jose Irio Illas, of the Spanish army, was killed by accident March 30, 1922. Daily communicant, frequent visitor of the Most Blessed Sacrament, he had also finished his yearly retreat on the day of his death. One of his last good works was to induce a companion who had long neglected his duties, to make a retreat.

("Agere", San Sebastian, Spain).

PRACTICAL QUESTIONS

Legal effect of suspension. A Father writes: "It is usual for Directors and the Council especially in Sodalities for young people to punish a refractory or negligent Sodalist sometimes with the penalty of "suspension". What are the juridical effects of this suspension? The "suspended" Sodalist is excluded for a time from meetings, active and passive voice, and the like. But *is he excluded also from the privileges and indulgences of the Sodality?*

Answer: No. Unless the Director intends by suspension to *dismiss* the Sodalist from the Sodality and after some time to admit him again. (In which case on admitting him again, what is required by the 28th Rule for the validity of admission, must be observed.) But generally the effect of suspension extends only to the *social rights* of the Sodalist, but does not do away with the character of Sodalist. The Director can dismiss the Sodalist, but unless he does so, he cannot take away from the Sodalist the use of the indulgences, and the rights granted to Sodalists by the Holy See.

On reserving a special place for the Prefect and the Assistants in the meetings. A Father writes: It is our custom to reserve separate seats in the meetings for the Prefect and the two Assistants, so that a holy emulation might be excited by this distinction and their good example may be more easily seen. Is this custom in use everywhere and to be commended?

Answer: The custom seems to be quite common and proper, that the Prefect and the Assistants should occupy the first places in the meetings so that the dignity of their office may be made manifest. Sometimes also the Consultors have more prominent seats than the other Sodalists; in other Sodalities, however, they are mixed in with the rest of the Sodalists, and the custom has something to commend it. It is evident that Candidates and Postulants are properly seated behind the approved Sodalists; it thus becomes evident that the former are not yet fully incorporated into the Sodality.

Dismissals because of Failure in Studies. A Father writes: It is the custom in some Colleges that Sodalists who are promoted to higher classes, are admitted into the higher Sodality after a time "*if their conduct has continued to be satisfactory*". And this phrase is taken to mean "*if they have received very high marks for keeping the rules of the college and for diligence, and if they have been marked at least "Fair" in their studies*". Unless they obtain the latter mark they remain suspended from the Sodality and after another semester, they are considered to be dismissed. Now if this rule be strictly observed, the result is that 1st, it is not the Director, but the Prefect or Sub-prefect of discipline who settles whether anyone is to be kept in the Sodality or not; 2d, it often happens that students who maintain their class standing with little effort are preferred to students who are diligent enough but less gifted; and a similar preference is given to the naturally meek and silent, over self-assertive and lively lads, who are nevertheless very good. We certainly ought to be severe in admitting, but not less severe in dismissing; for dismissal is often very harmful to the religious life of the young. What about it?

Answer: In our opinion, the observation made above is a very just one. As regards dismissal, it certainly is a grave matter to expel anyone from the Sodality; hence great caution should be used and Prefects and sub-prefects should not be substituted for the Director. As Ovid says:

Cuncta prius tentanda; sed immedicabile vulnus
Ense recidendum est, ne pars sincera trahatur.

Progress in studies does not always depend on diligence alone, As Horace said.

"*Non cuivis homini contingit adire Corinthum*".

So it would seem better that admission to and retention in the Sodality, be left to the prudent judgment of the Director, who should consider everything well and give serious consideration to the opinions of the teachers and prefects.

History of the Sodality of Our Lady desired. A Father writes: A History of the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin which would be easy to consult, is a desideratum. Just as your Reverence wrote a brief conspectus of the history of the Sodality, would that some one would write a complete one. Will not our Lady raise up an evangelist for her Sodalities?".

That's what we all say. Who will start?

SODALITY MAGAZINES

Printed on the cheapest grade of paper with the evident intention of reaching the poorest while paying its own bills, the "*Estrella do Mar*" of Rio Janeiro, Brasil, has some very useful features. We can readily admit that numbers of its subscribers will not read some of the articles, such as "*Scruples*" "*Spiritism*" "*Brief Method for Meditation*". But who can say that those who commonly pass over such subjects will *never* read one of them, not even out of *curiosity?*

We remember a diocesan journal of national circulation which publishes three-column lectures on theology and one-column sermons. Some hold the paper has no influence – nobody reads it, etc. I told this to a leading priest of a neighboring country and he replied: "No such thing. I know numbers who take the paper precisely because of its sermons."

Another priest told me of an English Non-conformist who read every sermon of Father Vaughan's. But where could he find them to read unless in the Catholic paper?

We have been thoroughly instructed in spiritual matters like meditation and in apologetics. Let us write about them repeatedly. If our Sodalists cannot find such matters treated in their Sodality magazines, where will they find them?

The "*Estrella do Mar*" treats as well and as ingeniously as it can Spiritism and Masonry. *The "Morn-*

ing Star" of India discusses Hinduism and its errors, which is precisely one of the great obstacles to the Christianization of India. This is a practical and agreeable way of stimulating Sodalists to a catechetical and apologetic activity suited to the Catholics and non-Catholics who surround them.

In "**The Catholic Leader**" **of Madras, India,** for March 4, 1926, we noticed a letter from a certain *Bro. Thomas, T. O. F.*, in which he said that in the 3rd Marian Congress held five years ago at Madras, a resolution had been passed without opposition recommending that the hierarchy should, in order to carry out the wish expressed by His Holiness Pope Benedict XV in his Encyclical "*Maximum Illud*", Nov. 30, 1919, establish an Arch-Confraternity for the *Conversion of India, Burma and Ceylon.* Rules, methods, watchword and motto were settled on. But in four dioceses where Bro. Thomas had lived, nothing of the sort had been done.

At present, the Third Order of St. Francis is being started in Madras and Bro. Thomas suggests:

"*Why not make the Order serve as the desired Arch-Confraternity in this archdiocese, and thus set an example which surrounding dioceses may follow or not as they choose?*

Having shown the wide scope of the Third Order, he concludes:

"*There is no line of religious activity along which the Tertiary may not run and help the clergy.* If the Third Order takes up this work, where would be the need of another Association?".

What may be thought of the above-mentioned resolution by the Church authorities in India, we do not know. And it is quite impossible for us to say how feasible it is. India is a great country, as large territorially as the United States east of the Rockies, and with a population of different peoples numbering 319,000,000. Hence, what will work in one place may not work in another.

But the resolution formed at the Congress points clearly to the great field open to Sodalists of Our Lady in the way of catechetical, social and charitable work. It shows the timeliness of publishing in Sodality periodicals practical instruction for Sodalists, put in such a way as to attract and hold the readers and help them in the home apostolate.

Certainly as regards the possibilities of the Third Order, we feel that the "*Sodality of Our Lady*" could be substituted in every sentence written by Bro. Thomas about the Third Order, and there would be no exaggeration.

The field is open. We are painfully aware that Directors often cannot be found owing to the scarcity of clergy. But at any rate here is another invitation to look thoroughly into the situation and see if, after all, something more can be done.

The idea of Third Orders doing this sort of work and thus rendering new associations superfluous is perfectly sound and the Sodality in substance (tho' not in form) is a Third Order.

MATTHEW TALBOT

Workingman and Sodalist

On June 7th, 1925, an old man fell in a Dublin street. He was rushed to a nearby hospital, but was dead when he arrived. In laying out the body for burial, it was found to be covered with cords and rusty chains, which had sunk into the flesh. Inquiry revealed that the dead man was an humble workman in a lumber yard, well known to his employers and fellow-workers as a very devout and charitable man. While little known personally to any priest, it was discovered that he was a Tertiary of St. Francis and a **Sodalist of Our Lady.**

A short sketch of his life has been written by Sir Joseph A. Glynn, President of the St. Vincent de Paul Society in Ireland, and we have drawn on it for the following illustrative incidents of his life (Catholic Truth Society of Ireland, pamphlet no. 832).

Matthew Talbot was **born of working people** in Dublin, and attended the Christian Brothers school for a short time. When he grew up, he became excessively addicted to drink, sometimes selling the shoes off his feet for that purpose. But at twenty-five he took a temporary pledge, which he later renewed and kept for life. Some years later, a good Catholic girl suggested to him that they marry, and Talbot began a Novena to know the will of God, but he received a reply in prayer that he was to remain single.

As regards **his daily life,** when he came home from work at about 5.30 p. m., he ate a little while kneeling, and continued in prayer (which included the singing of hymns), until his bedtime at 10.30 or 11 o'clock. For 14 years his bed was a plank covered with a linen sheet to hide the board, with a wooden pillow, only one blanket, and a few extra sacks in very cold weather. At 2 a. m., he arose and began two hours of prayer with arms outstretched, kneeling on his bed. He then dressed and went to St. Francis Xavier's Church in Gardiner Street, made the Stations of the Cross, heard Mass and communicated, leaving the church after a short thanksgiving. When work was slack, he retired to a shed to pray.

Apostolic Work. Blasphemy he rebuked whenever he heard it, and made reparation for it by prayer, and when he noticed bystanders laughing at blasphemers, he admonished them privately afterward, sometimes giving them a good book to read. He often interested the men he worked with by telling them incidents in the lives of the Saints which he had read.

"I haven't taken a drink for many years", said one of Talbot's acquaintances to him one day. "What about your soul?", asked Talbot abruptly. "When were you to confession last?" "Thirty years ago". Talbot lectured him on his danger, and brought him to confession.

Missions. The Irish Mission to China appealed to him very strongly, and he once said that he had given thirty pounds a year to it. As he was at that time receiving no more than twenty-five shillings a week, it-

can be seen how generous he was. At any rate during his life, he lived on the lowest possible margin, and gave the rest to charity, so that during the last year or two of his life, he was himself the object of the charity of others.

Devotions. Sunday he practically spent in Church and the evening of Sunday found him at his Sodality in Gardiner Street. After his devotion to our Blessed Lord, among which was the Holy Hour, he had a very special devotion to Mary, reciting daily her little Office, the whole Rosary, the Dolor Beads and those of the Immaculate Conception. Besides this, he recited numerous Litanies and performed systematically many novenas.

Tho' he could barely read and write, having left school at an early age, he had a trunkful of books, most of them dealing with the interior life. Those on our Lady which he prized most were *"True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin"* by Grignon de Montfort, and *"The Mystical City of God"*, by Mary of Agreda, which latter he would never part with. But the most thumbed of all, many of them too, falling apart from use, were his Manuals of Devotion.

Altho' his work required him to carry much heavy lumber every day he kept rigorously all Church fasts for over 30 years, and added many others out of private devotion. How much of these mortifications were done under the advice of a Spiritual Director is unknown, and the two priests who knew best the secrets of his soul, are dead.

Despite the rigor of his life, it was only two years before his death that he complained of illness. From then on, he was in the hospital several times, and no one detected his cords and chains, but when his body was stripped, he had evidently been wearing them since his partial convalescence. Thus died in harness at a good old age, a holy man whose life of unremitting prayer and penance recalls the most remarkable of ancient Irish Saints. Of course it is the Church alone who can judge of his sanctity, but surely the story of his life will help many of our Sodalists men and women to the practice of the interior life which is the soul of the apostolate.

Activity helps the Spirit. — The Sodality while not strictly a Third Order, is a very close approach to the Society, and has all its flexibility and wide scope of activities. Once it is recognized as such, many will become enthusiasts for it. The Sodality they so often complain about is not the Sodality of Our Lady according to the Rules of 1910, but a body which goes by the name and tends only or at least almost exclusively to the personal piety of the individual; it operates for the most part *ad intra.* Whereas the *Real* Sodality develops in its members a solid spirit, tending to perfection in the world, but also operates *ad extra* for the good of the neighbor; it knows very well that the man who has palpable evidence of the great needs, spiritual and temporal of the masses and who tries to relieve them, will as a result be urged to a deeper interior life. Feeling his own helplessness, he will be forced to go to God in prayer and sacrifice, with an earnestness to which otherwise he would be a stranger, because in his own case, i. e. in his own private affairs, there is no such pressing necessity. It is good to reflect on this because many seem to think that the Sodality *Active* is *ipso facto* outside its sphere, and therefore destined to lose its interior spirit.

CHRONICLE

Belgium. Meeting of secular Directors. Towards the end of 1925, in the Flemish section of Belgium, with the approval of the Bishops, meetings were held of secular priests who direct parish Sodalities for girls. Although there are very many Sodalities in that region which are aggregated to the Prima Primaria, nothing had hitherto been attempted to reform, encourage and direct them better to higher ends. Hence nobody expected very much from the congress and it was necessary to wait and see whether the secular priests would show themselves very prompt, or whether they would be diffident and afraid of the interference of Ours in their parochial affairs. Nevertheless, thanks be to God, everything went off very well, to the great benefit of the Sodalities.

In the five places where these one-day meetings were held, there were about 275 priests present. Leading men of the secular clergy presided, and in the diocese of Bruges, the Bishop, who favors the Sodalities very much, took the chair; the Bishop of Gand would have done the same at the meeting held in his city, had he not been ill. Cardinal Mercier and the Bishop of Liege also showed great kindness and great zeal for the cause.

At all the meetings the same questions were treated namely: *A*) The nature and purpose of the Sodalities; *B*) Their direction and government; *C*) Their origin, life and progress; *D*) Their religious, moral and social influence.

On all these subjects, parish priests, previously appointed (among whom some were deans) read good dissertations developing the synopsis which the Sodality Secretary of Our Province had sent them, so as to avoid causing the priests much trouble and so as to obtain unity. Discussion followed the reading of the papers.

Many advantages have come from these meetings. For many they were a real revelation of the nature of the Sodalities. They increased priestly zeal; and engendered a sincere desire for closer union between all Directors and between Sodalities as well. Finally, they gave our Secretary an excellent opportunity to become acquainted with the secular Directors.

It is very notable also that these meetings showed the very great utility, nay even the necessity of a periodical which would be directed to priests alone, and which would tend to the upbuilding and development not only of women's Sodalities but of all Flemish Sodalities without exception. That periodical, under the title *"Sedes Sapientiae"*, with money obtained from subscribers and with the spontaneous help of the Sodalities themselves, began publication last February and is to come out every other month. About 1.000 copies are to printed. It will clearly be an important social bond between the priests, the Sodalities and the Secretariate.

It is hoped to try a similar experiment this year, in the French section of Belgium. God grant that our efforts may meet with success.

J. Rutten S. J.

Editor's Note. The first number of "*Sedes Sapientiae*" (Tweemaandeljksch Tijdschrift voor Leiding van Mariacongregaties, Brugge, Korte Winket 10) edited by Father Joseph Rutten, is very promising.

Cardinal Mercier *publicly professed himself a Sodalist* on February 2, 1925, according to the new Belgian Sodality Magazine "*Sedes Sapientiae*". After Pontifical Mass he went with a priest, his one-time companion in studies and in the Sodality, to St. Romuald's Church and there in the presence of 600 college boys, renewed the act of consecration which he had pronounced in the same place sixty years ago with his priest companion. A year later the Cardinal died. Born on a Saturday, he died on a Saturday also.

Joint Consultations of Men's Sodalities in Zurich, Switzerland. The Men's Sodality of Zurich has sent to the Central Secretariate a program of a general consultation which they hold with all the men's Sodalities of the neighboring towns from time to time for the unification of Sodality activities. This time the question discussed was "*How Catholic youths when they grow up are to be transferred from juvenile to adult organizations*". A paper on the theme was read by a layman who is on the Zurich City Council; discussion followed. Towards the end of the consultation, a brief debate was held on the *promotion of works of charity*. So it is plain that the Sodality when well directed is by no means confined to pious psalm singing by children.

Puerto Montt, Chile. A Sodality for Men and Boys was erected in our College of St. Francis Xavier here in 1922, with the sub-titles of "Stabat Mater" and St. Ignatius. It numbers today 83 Sodalists.

Last year, a modest building for a *Catechism Center* was built in the suburbs with the alms of the Sodalists, and Christian Doctrine is taught there on Sundays and holydays of obligation to more than a hundred children.

Prisoners in jail are likewise visited every month by the Sodalists. To counteract the proselyting activities of Protestants, 20.200 pamphlets and leaflets of a controversial nature have been distributed.

The Sodality was greatly honored on August 2, 1925, when the Right Reverend Bishop humbly, begged and obtained the Medal of the Sodality from the hands of Reverend Father Rector, and immediately thereafter solemnly received twelve new members into the Sodality. His Lorsdhip so highly esteems the Sodality that he continued to wear its insignia on the day of his reception not only in the church and in the house but even in the streets. The Directors and Sodalists elected him by acclamation Honorary Prefect of the Sodality and gave him a very artistic medal of the Blessed Virgin as a testimonial of their gratitude.

F. M. Baranera S. J.

In Vienna, a Congress of all Directors of City Sodalities will soon be held and another Congress for their *Sodalists* is being arranged for October.

In Buenos Aires, on the 8th of December last, 10.000 women Sodalists marched in procession through the streets.

Alexander di Luzzago († 1602) who is mentioned in the List of Venerable Sodalists ("*A. O.*" p. 94 December, 1925) was not a Sodalist at Milan but at *Brescia.* This correction is from *Father Leonidas Grazioli, S. J.* in "*Stella Matutina*" p. 87, n. 3, 1926).

Statistics of Young Ladies' Sodalities in Germany. Following the German love of order and statistics, questionnaires were sent to all the Young Ladies' Sodalities in Germany. There is a certain center in Bochum to which all Marian societies of young women belong; these societies number 3.500.

The following figures are taken from the statistical statment of the archdiocese of Cologne. On October 1, 1923, there were in the archdiocese of Cologne, 857 Young Ladies' Sodalities; and as there are 1.621 parishes, it follows that in more than half of the parishes, there is such a Sodality. All together these 857 Sodalities had 134.178 members. According to age (as far as could be found out) 66.617 were between 14 and 20 years of age, and the rest, 67.561 were above 20. A more difficult question was the social condition or occupation of each Sodalists; hence not all Sodalities replied. Of the 407 Sodalities which did reply (their membership was 78.111), 32.764 lived with their parents, 8.598 were house servants, 10.444 were employed in offices or in stores, 10.899 were factory hands 10.786 were otherwise employed, 4.620 cultivated the liberal arts (e. g. teachers). Hence it is clear that *the membership of the Sodality extends to almost all the conditions of life.*

Among the activities engaged in by these Sodalities the first place is held by their religious formation, especially through the Exercises, conferences, doctrinal and apologetical courses, instructions on the Scriptures, and Eucharistic Sections. Besides, they apply themselves earnestly to practical couses in domestic science, spinning, mending clothes, washing, cooking, taking care of babies, hygiene, etc). Gymnastics are cultivated, always however within the bounds of Christian modesty a point of great importance where numberless sporting associations are supported by anti-Catholics, who reject all sense of shame and promote the "cult of the nude".

These Sodalities also select the best of the Sodalists with great care and train them to be efficient promotors of Catholic activities; thus in the Pentecost vacation, 65 chosen Sodalists took a "Social Worker's course, under the direction of men who are authorities on the subject. Besides in each deanery, there are monthly Congresses of the Prefects and some of the major officers of each Sodality.

It is with labor of this quality and quantity that these young women are trained to piety and work. Otherwise it would be unintelligible how among so many Protestants and neo-pagans, Socialists and Communists, the Catholic cause should time and again win such signal victories within the ranks of Catholics in Germany.

Would that Catholics and Sodalists in Catholic nations would learn how to work strenously and systematically from those who, in spite of far greater impediments, work with such good results in countries like Germany, England, Switzerland, and the United States, where there is so much Protestantism.

Meditation in common is now practiced by the Sodalists of *St. Joseph's European Boys' High School, Calcutta, India.* " The weekly meeting tends to become a routine affair, which leaves little visible impression on the daily life of the members", says one of them in the 1925 annual, (p. 70). To remedy this, the practice of mental prayer was started quite early in the year. Each attempt of the kind was preceded by a short discourse intended to set the points of the prayer before us and excite our devotion. One of the most conclusive signs of progress is the *increase of frequent Communion* among the Sodalists, many of whom approach the Holy Table daily. Even the younger members between 10 and 13 years of age who naturally find it somewhat difficult to be attentive during prayer are much more quiet in manner, and, we may hope, collected in thought, than at any time before. The latter figure may seem out of proportion with the rest, but owing to the change slowly but perceptibly coming over the whole of our life at school, more recruits are eager to join our ranks. In consequence of this, we have had to be stricter with regard to weekly attendance, in order to ensure that none but the best shall remain with us to work for the honor of Our Heavenly Mother.

" Within the last year our Sodality has given **three candidates for the priesthood,** who have begun their studies at St. Joseph's Seminary, Mangalore.

" On our patronal feast, Our Lady of Lourdes, we held an **Academy,** to which we invited all the other Sodalities of the parish. There was *a short play* about St. Francis Xavier, songs, recitations and essays. And for the grand finale *a tableau* of Blessed Bernadette at the Grotto by the Gave. "

Letters to the Editor

Many thanks for the back numbers of the " Acies Ordinata ".

I have adopted your suggestion about *visiting the poor.* The young men now visit boys who have left school and the practice of religion. The latter's excuse is " *No clothes* " and " *The church is too swell* ". The Young Men's Sodality have formed themselves into a St. Vincent de Paul's conference and one member is starting the Boy Scouts. All may collapse when I leave. As you point out, all depends on Directors.

The Sodality for Elementary School boys is a great success, and there are *no temporal attractions.* We have five rules: 1. Weekly meeting. 2. Weekly Communion. 3. Morning prayers. 4. Daily decade of the Rosary. 5. Night examination of conscience according to a method taught at the meetings.

We have an inner circle for Sodalists and an outer circle (very large) for " Novices "; – with " *secret meetings* " for the inner circle and officers. The *Pyx-Benediction* is the great attraction, and public *Stations of the Cross* during Lent. We make a good deal of sashes, officers, serving Mass, learning Latin prayers, processions, watching before the Most Blessed Sacrament, distributing magazines, voting at the secret meetings. I have tried to pass the boys on to the Young Men's Sodality on leaving school, but no *success* so far, on account of Sunday clothes and cinemas.

OVER THE TELEPHONE

The Aloysian Centenary is being diligently promoted by many of our Sodality Directors although considerable obstacles have to be overcome in many places. Some secular priests have so false an idea of St. Aloysius that they declare him to be practically impossible as a model for youth. It is for us to correct this false estimate of our Saint by word and pen. The Holy Father himself, when he lately presided over the Disputation held by students of the Gregorian University in his presence, spoke in the same sense, and expressed his desire that the Saint be put in the proper light. Our Sodalities and their Directors, will we feel sure, take the lead in distributing literature and in holding the Aloysian novenas of which we spoke in the November number of " *Acies Ordinata* ".

It should be noted however that the conduct of the Aloysian Centenary affairs does not pertain to our Secretariate, but that all books, pamphlets, postcards, and information on the subject should be asked from.

" Comitato Aloysiano , Via del Seminario 120, Roma (19) ".

" Sorry I cannot send you a subscription. I certainly would do so if I kept the purse. "

" I think the keeping of a good *log-book* insures continuity " (in the manner of running the Sodality. Ed.).

*** " It is pitiable the *ignorance of the true nature of the Sodality* that exists among even the best-intentioned. A young regent looked upon the Sodality as pictured in the ' *Acies Ordinata* ' as of a very *select* kind, that is, of a kind we should *not* expect to erect ordinarily. Something to be looked at and admired merely. "

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Editor : *Lawrence E. O'Keeffe, S. J.*
Superiorum permissu.

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